

SECTION 1: THE GREENSPACE PLAN

I. GREENSPACE PLAN OVERVIEW

ROLE OF THE GREENSPACE COMMISSION AND CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

Lexington-Fayette County citizens have been the motivating force behind the effort to plan for and create a greenspace system for the community. This Greenspace Plan effort grew from concerns, voiced by citizens in "Speak Out Lexington" meetings and the Bluegrass Tomorrow survey, about protecting greenspace and the community's special identity. The greenspace planning effort was spearheaded by a citizen Greenspace Commission, which was established by ordinance in December of 1990.

In all, 64 citizens representing varied interest groups served on the Greenspace Commission and the four subcommittees that supported its work. This citizen commission directed the plan from the earliest stages of drafting goals, deciding the scope of the plan, and inventorying resources, to the final stages of recommending a physical plan and funding mechanisms, developing a method for prioritizing greenspace acquisitions, and drafting this document. Background information about the Commission is in Section 2, Chapter I.

The commission also sought additional citizen involvement, through open meetings, a survey of rural property owners, and presentations to neighborhood, special interest, and governmental groups during the preparation of the Plan draft. So strong is the community interest in greenspace that there was little controversy during the planning, and the final Plan has a consensus of support from all Commission members.

OVERVIEW OF THE GREENSPACE PLANNING PROCESS AND GUIDE TO THE GREENSPACE PLAN

Section 1 of this document contains the recommendations of the Greenspace Plan. **Section 2** is a guide to the planning process, for those interested in the background studies and evaluations that were the basis for the Plan. The process is also summarized below, as a preview to the contents of the Plan. The "**Planning Process**" flow chart in Figure 1 gives a sense of how a very complex subject was divided into related steps.

The first step was to answer the questions, "What is 'greenspace'? What does 'the Bluegrass identity' mean?" (Chapter II) and to write goals that would explain what greenspace planning was meant to accomplish. The overall goal became the **mission statement** of the Greenspace Commission and this Plan: *"Develop a greenspace system that preserves the identity of the Bluegrass and provides a framework for regional planning."* By thinking through the **goals and objectives** (Chapter III) the Commission came to understand and agree upon the breadth of topics that needed to be woven together to achieve this mission.

The Commission next initiated a **resource inventory** to catalogue and map all of the natural and cultural resource factors and characteristics that relate to greenspace. The information included in the inventory is summarized in Figure 5, Chapter IV; notes about the inventory mapping and about information that was not available to include in the inventory are in Section 2, Chapter II.

Another step in gathering background information was to carry out a **mail-back survey of rural property owners** to learn their hopes and concerns about rural conservation, development, and greenspace. Other community surveys that could give insights into **public opinion and values** about greenspace were also reviewed. Results of these surveys are summarized throughout the Plan and more fully in Section 2, Chapter I.

The Commission developed a draft outline of the Greenspace Plan and the **scope of work** for the remainder of the planning process as a guide for **consultant selection**. Consultants were chosen through the standard competitive process of advertising for proposals, submission of written proposals by the consulting firms, narrowing of the field to four candidates based on the proposals, and final selection after oral presentations. Consultants H. Powell & Co., Inc. and Beth K. Stewart were selected.

The next step was to develop the Greenspace Physical Plan, described in Chapter IV, which begins with **concepts** of what the greenspace system should look like and what it should accomplish in both the rural area and the urban area. An **evaluation of inventoried resources** identified locations of resources that should be incorporated in the greenspace system (Section 2, Chapter III). As a part of the evaluation of resources, the Commission realized that the rural and urban area are not uniform, but have several distinct **landscape types**. Rural landscapes include the Kentucky River and Tributary Creek Valleys, General Agricultural, Horse Farms, and Rural Settlements. Urban area landscapes include Pre-World War II Neighborhoods, Post-World War II Neighborhoods, and Central Business District / Other Commercial Areas. The Commission identified the different resources that play a role in the character of each type of landscape (Chapter II).

To further develop the Greenspace Physical Plan, the many **opportunities for greenspace sites and linkages** were evaluated (Section 2, Chapter III). *Sites* are particular locations with significant resources or open space potential that could be preserved as a part of the greenspace system. *Linkages* are corridors such as streams, roads and abandoned railroad rights-of-way that can create an interconnected greenspace system throughout the urban and rural area. The resulting **Greenspace Physical Plan**, which maps the greenspace system sites and linkages for the urban area, Downtown, the rural area, and urban-to-rural connections across the urban service boundary, is described in Chapter IV.

The Commission researched various **methods for implementing the greenspace system** by reviewing state law, greenspace programs in other communities, and many publications about ways to protect and acquire greenspace properties. The methods selected as feasible and appropriate for this community are described in Chapter V.

The Greenspace Physical Plan lists many opportunities for creating a greenspace system, and Chapter V describes an array of implementation methods. How would choices be

made about which sites and linkages should be acquired for greenspace protection first, and which implementation methods would be appropriate for each property? A **prioritization process** was developed by the Commission, based on the values about greenspace expressed in the Goals and Objectives and criteria related to the resource inventory (Chapter V). Also, all of the greenspace linkage opportunities were classified as various **property types for implementation methods**. The different protection and management techniques that will be most effective for each type of property – whether stream corridor, road, or abandoned railroad right-of-way – are listed in Chapter V.

The **Action Plan** in Chapter VI describes the specific actions that must be pursued to implement the Greenspace Plan. First, it summarizes the **critical next steps** that must be taken to incorporate greenspace protection into the development review process and to detail the Greenspace Physical Plan proposals. The **agencies and organizations that will play a role** in creating the greenspace system and the **responsibilities proposed for each** are listed. Issues raised in the Greenspace Plan that should be **incorporated in the Comprehensive Plan Update** are discussed. Finally, Chapter VI recommends the **educational programs and regional coordination** that must be pursued for the greenspace effort to be successful in the long term.

GUIDANCE FROM PREVIOUS LEXINGTON-FAYETTE COUNTY PLANS

The concept of "greenspace" is a synthesis of many different planning concerns, from greenways to bikeways. The Lexington-Fayette County community has pursued several planning programs in the past that relate directly to creation of the greenspace system. The Greenspace Plan was an opportunity to consider these previous separate reports within a broader context, and to find the connections and common goals they shared. It was an opportunity to review the recommendations of plans that have not been formally adopted by the Urban County Government, such as the Corridor Enhancement Study and the Greenway Plan, and bring forward those recommendations that are relevant to the greenspace concept and that will help to implement details of the greenspace system.

The following plans were consulted during the planning process for background information, policy direction, and implementation methods: the 1988 Comprehensive Plan; the Corridors Enhancement Study (1992); the South Broadway Corridor Plan (1990); the Greenway Plan (1992); and the Priority 1 Bicycle Facilities Plan (1992). The information that was relevant to the planning process from each of these plans is discussed more fully in Appendix B.

There have been many past planning studies that have envisioned efforts such as the Greenway Plan, stormwater drainage plans, Bicycle Facilities Plan, Corridor Enhancement Study, Stone Fence Survey, and historic surveys as linked pieces in a puzzle that could create a comprehensive system to protect the community's special identity and resources. The Greenspace Plan has become the vehicle for actually combining proposals from these efforts into one overall plan.

ADOPTION OF THE GREENSPACE PLAN

The adoption process for this Plan is related in Section 2, Chapter I. The Greenspace Goals were incorporated in the draft Goals and Objectives for the Comprehensive Plan Update. The final version of the Greenspace Plan was adopted by the Urban County Council on ** as an element of the Comprehensive Plan.